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FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8711  
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 6053  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1294  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1472  
RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN 0016  
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
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UNCLAS ASMARA 000135

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MAKING AN ERITREAN BORG: POLITICAL RE-EDUCATION  
BEGINS AGAIN

¶1. (U) The sole political party of Eritrea, the Peoples' Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), is harkening back to the days of Megistu and mandatory Marxist-Leninist education training. With the blessing of the Government of Eritrea (GSE), they have implemented political training for all government employees. In the Fall of 2006, the PFDJ started the classes, focusing initially on the national service employees of the various ministries. At the start of these re-education sessions, the participants believed they would only be required to attend one or two sessions, and the re-education would be complete. However, the two-hour sessions have become a weekly occurrence with mandatory attendance and admonishment for tardiness. In the past few weeks, the audience of these classes has expanded and now all employees of the government must participate in the weekly two hour re-education classes.

¶2. (U) According to reports from participants, the curriculum of the sessions is broad, covering Eritrea's history, the history of the struggle and political ideology. Class topics have included: reiteration of "weyane" (Ethiopia) as the enemy; the importance of self-reliance; and how the struggle was fought independently, with the unity of the Eritrean people and without support from the international community, drawing parallels to Eritrea's current situation. PFDJ members serve as the instructors and the classes occur at the ministries' offices. Conjectures abound regarding the reasoning behind the classes. Some claim the focus was initially on the youth because they were disconnected from Eritrea's history and the political belief system on which Eritrea is based, and needed training in order to increase their support of the PFDJ and the GSE. Others cite as the impetus the concern of the GSE leadership that Eritrean society is increasingly diversified in opinions and perspectives, is splintered and no longer has the feeling of unity experienced during the struggle. One Eritrean speculated that the classes would soon expand to include all adult Eritreans.

¶3. (U) Comment: The re-education, while having a Star Trekian Borg-like quality, reflects the GSE and PFDJ's on-going efforts to ensure that all Eritreans think and act as the leadership wishes. The GSE's propaganda campaigns and control of the media complement the

re-education classes, and are an effort by the GSE to establish "group think" and discourage independent thought. While one can appreciate the wish by the leadership to ensure that all Eritreans understand and are proud of Eritrea's history, the focus on political ideology and the fact that the classes are mandatory detract from any attempt by the PFDJ to claim the courses are just free public education. End Comment.

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